

Top Secret



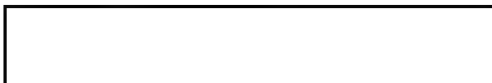
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CHILE: Santiago remains calm, but strike outcome continues to be uncertain. (Page 7)

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CHILE: Santiago is calm on the surface, but both the government and the strikers are determined to force a solution favorable to their interests.

Many stores and schools are open, and supplies of food and fuel are increasing, according to the US Embassy and press reports. Government leaders are declaring that the situation is returning to a state of normalcy. Police have replaced army troops guarding important installations, and street violence has diminished.

Yesterday, however, the government took over some major commercial establishments, including downtown department stores, retail food markets, a large construction company, the only remaining private wholesale food distributor, and the American-owned Dow Chemical plant. This move will put added pressure on businessmen to end the strike on the government's terms, but some opposition leaders are seeking additional resources to expand the protest.

Supporting the businessmen, bus companies have voted to go out on strike, reversing a previous promise to the government. Some white-collar unions also decided to join the strike today.

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The army, however, shows no signs of wavering from its determination to defend the Allende government and to suppress the strike that it considers illegal.

In a dispassionate speech delivered late on 18 October, President Allende promised the nation that there would be free elections as long as he remained in office, and that those who sought to overthrow him could not "reverse history." He called for citizens to close ranks in the face of external aggression from the Kennecott copper corporation. This plea was answered by increased political demands from strikers, who now insist on the return of all the industries taken over yesterday.

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